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Date: Tue, 9 Jan 2001 16:13:47 -0800
To: "Dr. Richard J. Roberts" <roberts@neb.com>
From: "Patrick O. Brown" <pbrown@cmgm.stanford.edu>
Subject: Re: "getting out the vote" letter
Cc: lipman@ncbi.nlm.nih.gov, lead@publiclibraryofscience.org
X-Lines: 59

Hi Rich,

This issue never came up in my conversation with Martha, which was completely amiable. But David Lipman told me the same thing following his conversation with Martha. So I don't really know what she means by the public library of science "going too far".

David Lipman suggested that some scientists are put off by what they perceive in the open letter as an antagonistic attitude toward the journals. This was not obviously not my intent in drafting the letter, but I've heard this interpretation more than once. David's suggestion was that we modify the "pledge" component of the letter so that it is purely positive - essentially stating that because the signers want their published work to be freely available for all purposes, they will publish their work exclusively in the journals that have already made a commitment to make their archives freely available through PubMed central and other hosts after 6 months. (Leaving out any references to their reviewing, editing, subscription practices).

This would require a modification of the current version of the letter, with all the complications that would create, but David argued that it would be worth it, since the letter could then be seen unambiguously as a positive decision by the signers to do what's necessary to make their work available and useful to the widest possible audience.

I agree. However, changing the letter now raises many practical

Patrick O. Brown, 1/10/01 8:49 AM -0800, discussion of changes in open letter

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issues, since we would need to ask the signers of the original letters to approve the new version.

What do you think?

Pat